



MOFFA
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2015 Annual Report

In 2015—Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance's 23rd year as a 501(3)c non-profit, statewide, organization—we continued to build on our long-standing commitment to education and outreach in pursuit of our mission of *"Promoting organic agriculture and the development and support of food systems that revitalize and sustain local communities"*. It was a year of innovation and new endeavors, but also a time of recommitting to collaborations with many long-standing partners.

As a nearly all-volunteer entity MOFFA is driven by the commitment of its dedicated board members who share freely of their time implementing ideas and programs suggested, supported and often conceived by our membership. Eight board meetings were held in 2015, some in person and some by phone/video. Board members for all or part of 2015 were Lee Arboreal, Chris Bardenhagen, John Biernbaum, Dan Bewersdorff, John Hooper, Vicki Morrone, Dan Rossman, Julia Studier, Dane Terrill, and Karen Warner. As a vibrant and fluid governing body the board continues to experience occasional changing of the guard. In December of 2015 the board held election of officers for 2016. Our new board officers are John Biernbaum – Chair, Dan Rossman – Vice-Chair, Dane Terrill – Treasurer, and Julia Studier – Secretary.



Dan Rossman joined the board in January, 2015.

In 2015 dues paying membership stood at 122, a combination of farms, organizations, businesses, families and individuals. This number is similar to the previous years and although our quarterly newsletter reaches over 1300 individuals, securing membership commitment continues to remain a challenging task. This source of funding comprises a significant percentage of our operating costs.

The MOFFA Farm Guide, *A Guide to Michigan's Organic and Ecologically Sustainable Growers and Farms*, which had been solely an electronic version on our website, also manifested in a handsome printed booklet this year. There were in 2015 130 listings. One of MOFFA's goals is to continue the vigorous pursuit of growers and farmers to add in order to expand this offering to the general public.



Your MOFFA board made a commitment in 2015 to once again host our own educational event. Reimagining how best we could educate and disseminate desired relevant knowledge, the MOFFA Organic Intensives was created. Rather than attempting to duplicate a “conference”, which many of our partners were doing annually



Dane Terrill presents at the Compost, Vermicompost, Extracts and Teas session at Organic Intensives 2015.

and which we assist by sponsoring and participating in, we created an intensive six-hour presentation on topics of keen interest, feeling that this would be the optimum use of our resources and energy. The first annual Organic Intensives, with three themes addressed in separate all day sessions, was a very satisfying and

extremely well received event. So much so that we plan on this as an annual event, possibly twice a year in the future. Topics for 2015 were: Compost, Vermicompost, Extracts and Teas; Cut Flowers for Profit and Diversification; and Edible Landscaping and Permaculture. Planning for 2016 OI started in July and continued through the end of the year with three new topics and speakers selected and invited.

Communicating with members and non-members alike has consistently evolved through the decades. The aforementioned quarterly newsletter, “Michigan Organic Connections”, sent primarily via email, but also available as a hard copy for members, continues with each issue to attract more readership. One unique aspect is the submission of extremely well written articles almost solely from our membership. Each issue revolves around a general theme, although articles are not exclusively confined to the main topic; the newsletter is also filled with current events and relevant links. Topics in 2015 were: Economics of Organic Farming, Seed Saving, Carbon Sequestration, and The Education Issue. All electronic versions of the newsletter dating back to Jan. 2012 are available on the MOFFA website – www.moffa.net.

MOFFA could not exist without the contribution of time and effort made by its volunteers, both those who serve on the board of directors and others who write for the newsletter, help out with the booth at conferences, contribute their expertise in specific areas, and serve on committees. MOFFA has six standing committees – Education, Membership, Loan, Volunteer, Nominating, and Policy. Special committees are formed for unique one-time ventures or annual events; e.g. this year we had a very active group of individuals working on the 2015 Organic Intensives.

MOFFA partnered with several MSU Researchers during 2014 and 2015 to secure funding from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program managed by MDARD. The focus of the work was organic raspberry and sweet cherry production and pest management in a one-acre three-season high tunnel facility located at the Horticulture

Teaching and Research Center. Summation of the work and outcome report is available on our website.

Throughout 2015 your Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance dedicated resources and many hours to partnering and sponsoring events, conferences, meetings and gatherings of all natures to promote and discuss with countless individuals the need and benefits of the growing of food, fiber and fauna in an organic, ecologically sustainable manner. One primary goal of the board in this last year was to continue the conversation as to how we can be more effective at working with the many like-minded groups to forge a stronger bond and open more channels of communication. To that end we had a major presence at the following events:



- Michigan Family Farms Conference (January)
- Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (January)
- Michigan Farmers Market Association Conference (March)
- Organic Reporting Session (March)
- Organic Farmers of Michigan Field Day (August)
- Southwest Michigan Harvest Fest (September)
- Great Lakes Bioneers (October)
- Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Growers Expo including a first time Meet and Greet session on Wednesday evening. (December).

In addition our board members participate as presenters to smaller gatherings, e.g. Garden Clubs, Master Gardener Associations, Church Socials, etc.

On a more national scale MOFFA is an active member or supporter of three prominent organizations that speak to the nation and beyond: the National Sustainable Agricultural Committee, Organic Consumers Organization, and the Cornucopia Institute.

The MOFFA board, your voice for Michigan ecologically sustainable agriculture, remains viable. While we would always appreciate and could use more members, and more member input, the year definitely concluded with a very optimistic feel for our future. Prepared and submitted by:

MOFFA Board of Directors Chair, 2012-2015